(b) if so, details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there will be corresponding increase in wages; and

(d) if so, details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) There is no proposal presently to increase working hours for workers.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Increase in wage ceiling under ESI Act

230. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is seriously considering to increase the wage ceiling for coverage of employees under the Employees State Insurance Act from Rs. 7,500 per month to Rs. 10,000 per month;

(b) whether the Employees State Insurance Corporation which was scheduled to meet on June, 15 to deliberate on this issue has met;

(c) if yes, the details of (a) and the decision taken by the ESIC on this issue; and

(d) how many employees are going to be benefited by increasing the proposed, ceiling in the country, particularly in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The ESI Corporation in its 136th meeting held on 15th June 2006 has approved a proposal for enhancing the wage ceiling for coverage under the ESI Act, 1948 from Rs. 7500/- to Rs. 10,000/- per month. The Government has since issued the intention notification on 20th July 2006 *vide* GSR No. 432(E).

(d) Approximately, 5.00 lakh employees and 15 lakh family members are likely to be benefited in the country. Approximately 22,000 employees are likely to be benefited in Andhra Pradesh.